

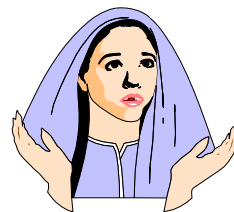
RAISING GODLY TEENAGERS



1. FACTORS WHICH FORM TEENAGERS
2. THE FOUR BASIC TEMPERAMENTS
3. STAGES OF ADOLESCENCE
4. SIBLING RIVALRY, BIRTH ORDER
5. DISCIPLINE & TRAINING
6. GOD'S WILL FOR YOUR CAREER
7. THE GREAT CHRISTIAN MUSIC DEBATE
8. PEER PRESSURE & SELF WORTH
9. CHANGING BODIES (Sex, Dress, etc.)
10. COURTSHIP & MARRIAGE
11. SPIRITUAL GROWTH
12. SPIRITUAL WARFARE

By Jerry Schmoyer
252 W. State St.
Doylestown, Pa. 18901
Phone 215-348-8086
jerry@schmoyer.net
<http://mainstreetbaptist.org>
<http://homeschool.mainstreetbaptist.org>

RAISING GODLY TEENAGERS



By Jerry Schmoyer

1. FACTORS WHICH FORM TEENAGERS

TO THINK ABOUT: Why does God have children go through such a thing as adolescence?

THE TEENAGE DILEMMA

When Tim, our oldest son, was about to turn 13 he wasn't excited about it. In fact, to our surprise he didn't want to be a teenager! It seems most of what he knew about them was bad and he didn't want to be that way. He hasn't, but there is truth to what he feared. Teenagers don't have a good reputation today. Statistics bear this out: one million will run away from home this year, 250,000 teenage girls will give birth to illegitimate babies, almost 1/2 million will have an abortion, and half a million will attempt suicide (10% will succeed). Twelve million regularly will use drugs.

Home school families aren't immune to this. Many feel insecure about raising teens anyway. Can I prepare them for college or career? Can I help them mature into an adult while teaching my other children? Our children are the front wave of the first generation of widespread homeschooling to through adolescence at home. There isn't much to turn to for help in this. It can be difficult for the whole family. Then, too, the family has other challenges: younger children to teach, changes in careers and goals as parents meet middle age, etc.

Still, adolescence can be a second chance for parents to fix some weaknesses or missed spots in their relationship with their teens. It can be a rewarding and enjoyable time!

I now have 4 children in the 10 and above category (when adolescence starts), and have done much study in order to equip myself to be the best father I can be for them. This series of articles is based on that research as presented to our local support group.

UNDERSTANDING TEENS

Following is the outline I will use in this: first you must understand (analyze) your teen, then apply what you know.

I. ANALYZE THE PERSON

A. Factors we are born with which form us

Temperaments, learning style

B. Factors after birth which form us

Stages of adolescence, siblings, peers, self-acceptance

II. APPLY THE PRINCIPLE

A. Exercise influence, not control (discipline, communicate, motivate)

B. Give guidance, not orders (God's will, choosing career, music, mate)

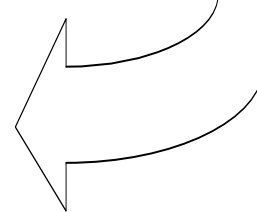
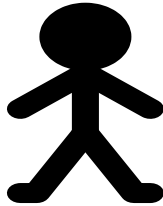
C. Create a balanced attitude to the body (appearance, sex, drugs)

D. Instill spiritual reality (commitment, growth, spiritual warfare)

Before trying to understand teens, we must break down the various factors that make them. God creates a person (the raw material) and then that is formed and shaped by factors that influence change and form it. Below is a breakdown of how I understand this:

FORMING CHARACTER

CHARACTER: The real you ("soul"), mind, will & emotions.



AT BIRTH

Factors God decides before birth which can't be changed ('raw equipment' we have to work with)

PHYSICAL EQUIPMENT

(size, height, shape, sex, color, etc.)

MENTAL EQUIPMENT

(IQ, skills/talents, etc.)

EMOTIONAL EQUIPMENT

(temperament)

AFTER BIRTH

Factors that influence, but can not completely change the traits we are born with (forms the raw equipment)

PARENTS

(discipline, acceptance, training, love)

FAMILY

(birth order, relationship with siblings)

HEALTH (diet, exercise, illness)

ENVIRONMENT

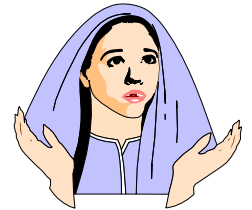
(neighborhood, friends, life experiences)

FREE WILL CHOICES (follow flesh or God)

God gave us our children to love and raise, and that includes their teenage years. Parents are still the best ones to raise their teens. Its no time to quit or give up, to panic or fear. When we better understand our teens (what they are going through, what's happening to their minds and bodies, etc.) and how to respond to these things, we can have a better, more peaceful relationship with them. Psalm 127:3-5 is true of teens, too! *Sons are a heritage from the LORD, children a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one's youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their enemies in the gate.*

ASSIGNMENT: Parents, talk with your children about with your children about when you were a teenager. Speak honestly of your joys and fears, success and failure. Give them a balanced view of what to expect, avoid extremes. Answer their questions honestly. Then let them talk about how they feel about the teenager years. What are their hopes and fears? What can you do to help? Turn them to God as the only One who can really help them through this time.

RAISING GODLY TEENAGERS



By Jerry Schmoyer

2. THE FOUR BASIC TEMPERAMENTS

TO THINK ABOUT: What is your favorite color and why?

BACKGROUND

We all know the promise in Proverbs 22:6 which says *"Train up a child according to his way (bent) and when he is old he will not turn from it."* The key to making it pay off is the command to train children up *"according to his way/bent."* This refers to the 'raw equipment' we receive from God at birth (see article 1 "Factors Which Form Teenagers"). Perhaps the most important, yet least understood factor is the temperament. Personally God used it more than anything else to help me understand myself and work through problems that long plagued me. He continues to use knowledge of the temperaments in my family and ministry. I don't know of any one tool outside of the Bible that has been more helpful.

Hippocrates (460-370 BC), the father of medicine, first developed the four basic temperaments and showed that emotions affect our bodies. It has been passed on down by many men through the ages. Immanuel Kant backed it in 1798. In more recent times, though, it has been rejected because of Freud's influence, saying man is a total product of his environment and is not born with natural tendencies, a sin nature, etc. Man is just like other animals they say. Christians have been studying the temperaments as popularized by Tim LaHaye (and to some extent Gary Smalley). I strongly, strongly, strongly recommend you get a book on the temperaments by Tim LaHaye and devour it! There are many different ones: the temperaments in general or specifically related to man, woman or child.

Before surveying the four temperaments there is one more thing to understand. By temperament I am referring to inborn traits that subconsciously affect man's behavior. It differs from character (the real you: mind, will & emotions) & personality (the 'face' you show others).

EXTROVERT - INTROVERT

There are four basic temperaments: two extrovert and two introvert. Extroverts are optimists, make friends easily, talk fluently, and are people-persons. Introverts are pessimist, shy, have few close friends, express themselves better in writing than talking, and are loners.

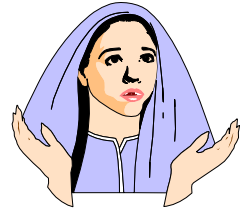
The two extrovert temperaments are Sanguine and Choleric, the introvert temperaments are Melancholy and Phlegmatic. Everyone has one basic temperament and also a secondary temperament. These create a unique blend for everyone. God uses three colors (red, blue and yellow) to create all the various colors and shades today. He uses four temperaments to create all the various temperaments today.

ASSIGNMENT: Write an evaluation of yourself and your temperament. Include your strengths and weaknesses. How does knowing this help you? What can you do to improve?

BASIC TEMPERAMENTS

	SANGUINE	CHOLERIC	MELANCHOLY	PHLEGMATIC
Teen	David - Esther	Joseph - Miriam	Daniel - Ruth	Timothy - Mary
Adult example	Peter	Paul	Moses	Abraham
Color	bright YELLOW (sun)	hot RED (fire)	deep BLUE (ocean)	cool GREEN (grass)
Animal	Rooster	Lion	Beaver	Turtle
Summary	Respond to Environment	Strong Will	Sensitive Perfectionist	Easy-Going
"P" word	Popular	Powerful	Perfect	Peaceful
Extrovert - Introvert	Extrovert - Optimist	Extrovert - Optimist	Introvert - Pessimist	Introvert - Pessimist
Careers	Salesmen, Actors	Businessmen, Police	Art/Music, Computers	Accountant, Diplomat
Strengths	Friendly - Talkative Warm - Outgoing Emotional - Enthusiastic	Confident - Determined Practical - Productive Independent - Decisive	Gifted (talent, analyze, organized, intellect) Sacrificial/Loyal	Flexible - Conservative Easy-going - Dependable Calm - Humorous
Weakness'	Weak-willed - Unstable Changeable, Undisciplined Self-centered - Unorganize	Self-Sufficient - Proud Control - Unemotional Unsympathetic - Cruel	Insecure - Critical Negative - Moody Unsociable - Revengeful	Unmotivated - Fearful Self-protective - Selfish Slow - Stubborn
Problems	Personality carries through life, so hides many problems inside self. Puts hard things off, over-extends self, doesn't follow through and finish what he starts.	Most to offer in strengths, most to overcome in weakness'. Lacks love. Needs love most, but hardest to love. Lacks kindness, wants to win.	Sets too high standards for self. Afraid of rejection, criticism because overly sensitive. Loyal to friends, but few close friends. Poor self image.	Easy-going, loving nature hides deep problems of selfishness. Hurts people with unkind jest or humor. Does not put out full effort at consistent pace. Protects self from problems.
Teen Strengths	Popular, joins clubs Charming, want to please Daring, life of party Apologetic	Natural leader Organized Competent Excels in emergencies Responsible	Good student, organized High standards Conscientious, Responsi Sensitive Thrifty	Witty, humorous Good listener Casual attitude Hides emotions Gets along with everyone
Teen Weakness'	Deceptive, con-artist Needs peer approval Easily led astray Not responsible	Bossy, controlling Knows Everything Critical, judgmental Loner, few friends	Depressed, withdrawn Inferiority, poor self image Suspicious, critical Inflexible	Quietly stubborn Indecisive, procrastinates Sarcastic Uninvolved

RAISING GODLY TEENAGERS



By Jerry Schmoyer

3. STAGES OF ADOLESCENCE

TO THINK ABOUT: What animal would you rather be if you had to be an animal? (What animal best pictures your father? your mother?)

IN-BETWEEN-AGERS Mark Twain once said, "When a kid turns 13, stick him in a barrel, nail the lid shut, and feed him through the knot hole. When he turns 16, plug the hole." What happens when a child turns 13, or 16, or whatever teen age, that causes such changes? What's it all about?

Adolescence is like a house on moving day - a temporary mess! Everyone goes through it. Even the apostle Paul went through this process (1 Cor. 13:11). Let's see if we can't make some order and understanding out of this mess, though. If we as parents are to train and raise them, there must be some way of getting hold of what is going on and how we can make it better instead of worse.

CHALLENGING THE GIANTS Children grow up seeing themselves as helpless, totally dependent on 20 foot tall sovereign giants to provide for them in every area of life. They feel small and powerless, needing protection and care. Suddenly they are thrust into adolescence when their hypothalamus starts sending chemical messages to the pituitary gland telling it to start preparing the body for the onset of puberty. Changes in the body, mind and emotions begin. The child finds himself aiming for a position of equality with these giants. What a scary, seemingly-impossible task looms before them! If parents can understand this, though, they can help a lot. For one thing, it helps parents understand why their teens start paying more and more attention to the parent's faults and weakness'. He's trying to whittle the 20' giant down to size, to a more attainable goal. Mark Twain also said: "It was a curious thing. When I was about 13, my father's intelligence started to drop. His mental abilities continued to decline until I reached 21, when these abilities began miraculously to improve."

For adolescents, it's easier to pull away, to separate, to feel like they are abandoning their parent when they see that parent as more of an enemy than a friend. Also, if a parent can take himself down from the pedestal by admitting to his faults and sharing his own struggles (past and present) his child won't feel he has to look for chinks in the armor.

CHILDHOOD ALL OVER AGAIN It's interesting to note that the emotional stages adolescents go through are very similar to the physical stages young children go through. Both start with the child making an effort to separate from the parent and be their own person. They begin to discover who they are in their own right. Before long they start exploring the adult world around them, unaware of the dangers it holds. When they get into trouble or venture too far away they come running back to their parents to be cared for. They live in a very selfish, self-centered world, thinking only of themselves. They try taking on adult mannerisms and activities. Children will dress up and pretend different activities. Adolescents do something similar when they 'try on' various peer or adult actions, vocabulary, mannerisms, or activities. They'll find some that fit and others they reject. It's sort of trial and error. As more and more begin to fit they will become increasingly independent until they develop their own personality and character, something they like and which they feel fits them. The world calls this 'finding yourself.' Young children do this physically through

the first years of life. Adolescents follow the same pattern emotionally during their teen years. It isn't always a smooth transfer. Some go through really rebellious times ("terrible twos" all over again). Often it is like a car stuck in the snow. They rock back and forth, gaining ground and sometimes losing ground, until there is a sudden surge ahead, only to repeat the same process.

PREPARING THE SHIP TO LEAVE HARBOR What is our role as parents in all of this? It's like preparing a ship to leave the harbor. Before heading out to sea on its own the ship is securely tied to the dock while it takes on fuel (love, acceptance, security, confidence, good experiences to draw from) and makes preparations for the voyage (training in values, knowledge, etc.). If the ship is sent off too soon it is doomed. Once the engine starts (hypothalamus, etc.) it better be loaded for if the ropes aren't cast off in time for a smooth departure it can tear some of the pier on its way out.

This leaving parental authority and control is natural and normal. It is a God-given drive to 'leave the nest,' 'cut the apron strings' or however you want to phrase it. Genesis 2:24 says a person must leave (break dependency) parents before being able to cleave to a mate. Parents must help their teens with this process. Thus parents find their role changing from sovereign control (20' giant) to more of a friend-friend relationship. The lines of control are drawn in (but not completely severed). Responsibility for actions is passed from parent to teen (let them suffer the consequences of their actions, both positive and negative). Peers take on more and more importance as adolescence compares themselves to see if they are acceptable to others their age.

During the early stages of adolescence teens will argue and talk back. During the later stages, though, if things haven't been worked out right, they'll start distancing themselves from their parents by rejecting some of their parent's more important values, especially spiritual ones. This is a prime way of 'getting back' at their parents. It is often the cause for PK's (Pastor's Kids) and MK's (Missionaries Kids) having such a bad reputation!

If children don't work through these stages they won't mature into a balanced adult. We all know many adults who have immaturity's from stages they missed as teens. In the parable of the prodigal (Luke 15:11-32) son we see this. The younger son rebelled (one extreme) to exert his independence. His ship pulled away prematurely and failed. However the older brother who stayed home and never went through the stages of maturing wasn't any better off. He never established a secure identity for himself, that's why he couldn't rejoice in his brother's return. He still needed parental favoritism because he didn't have any security in himself.

MOTHERS & FATHERS, BOYS & GIRLS It is usually the mother the teen first starts breaking from. Mothers stand for childhood, and being close to and dependent on a mother makes a teen feel like a child. Girls can have a harder time of this than boys. Not only do they tend to hypersensitivity and emotionalism more than boys during these years, but they often don't have anyone to turn to when they turn from their mother. Boys have long been taught not to be 'Mamma's boy', and they have their father to draw closer to. Fathers play important roles during these early adolescent years. They serve as way stations for adolescents leaving childhood (mother). If they are sensitive and available they can greatly help their sons and daughters.

If mothers or even fathers talk to them or treat them like children they will immediately notice. This more than anything causes more rebellion in them. They aren't mature enough to say "I want to think and decide for myself. Don't treat me like a child. When you boss me around I feel like a child, and I don't like that." Parents must listen to hear that said in their actions and forms of rebellion. Parents must learn to really listen - be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to become angry (James 1:19). That means parents must work through their own fears and insecurities, their own immaturity's and lack of self-control, their own hesitancy about letting go. Adolescence, to be handled right, means a parent must be mature and secure in their own right. If you can't handle your emotions you can't handle theirs!

EXIT PARENTS, ENTER PEERS When adolescents start turning FROM parents, it is peers they turn TO. They need to know how they compare to others their age. Are they OK? Do they fit in?

Can they make and keep new friends? These become VERY important for them. If they are unwilling to spend a night away from home, avoid peers, seem especially fearful, or are anxious when not with their parents, then something is wrong.

Give them more freedom: let them stay up later, go some places with their friends, have more responsibility and input around the house. Teens are like kites. They are a bit difficult at first to get off the ground, when as you give them more and more string they can perform nicely some distance from you. Give too much string and they'll fly away, though.

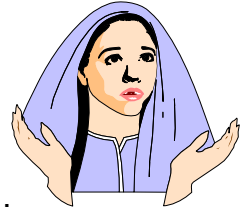
Do your best to help them have the right friends. Make your home open for others. Get to know their friends (sometimes you can help someone else's adolescent better during these years than you can your own). Talk with them about their friends: why they picked them, traits they like and don't like (ones they'll want to copy or reject), why they do what they do, etc. Its a good way of keeping communication open and helping them think through what they are doing.

OPPOSITE SEX FRIENDS As adolescence progresses, teens are more and more interested in the opposite sex. As they become more secure with their own identity and fitting in with same-sex friends, they start wondering if the opposite sex will accept them for who they are becoming. This is natural and important. Anything having to do with dating, romance, love, etc., must be rejected (they should have been thoroughly trained in this for years - a future article will cover it). However brother-sister friendships are very valuable. Unless they understand the opposite sex and know what traits in the opposite sex they like and dislike, they will have a much harder time when God does bring the right person into their lives. It helps them know how to act around the opposite sex -- what is accepted and what is rejected. Again, though, it must be around godly teens with the same values your teens have.

REGRESSIONS Its natural for the boat to make a quick trip back to the dock to take on emergency supplies from time to time. Sudden regression is natural, they'll pass through it if you give them some space. They can't be forced or pushed in their progression through the various stages of adolescence. Encourage them, but they must do it on their own. Like a bird getting out of an egg or butterfly out of a cocoon, they have to do it on their own to survive.

Thus adolescence can be an exciting and growing time. Special bonding and closeness can take place. Or it can become a constant battle for control, a time of uncontrolled emotions and a home in uproar. Understanding what your teen is going through can help a lot. Working through your own problems is also essential. With God's help you can enjoy a rewarding relationship with your teens, one that will last the rest of your lives

RAISING GODLY TEENAGERS



By Jerry Schmoyer

4. SIBLING RIVALRY, BIRTH ORDER

TO THINK ABOUT: Where do you fit in your families birth order and what difference did that make?

A few years ago I came across a verse that I hadn't really noticed before, but it really struck me when I saw it. In fact, we all memorized it and it is quoted around here quite often. Its Psalm 133:1: "How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity." With my three oldest boys all in or near their teen years the verse becomes more true each year. Yet how are we to have our children live in unity? Just what degree of love and cooperation is to be expected? What conflict is normal and natural? It gets hard for parents, and especially home schooling parents. We, who love our children so much and want them around us so we can enjoy them, often find we experience more and more disunity. Being together all the time can seemingly make this worse, not better. How can we understand this? What are we to do? First, we must realize that this is a universal problem, not just your family. Its not new, either. Its always been.

JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS Joseph's brothers hated him (Genesis 37:4) for getting them into trouble by tattling on them (Genesis 37:2) and because their father overtly favored Joseph over them (Gen 37:3-4). Joseph's telling them about a dream in which they bowed down to him (Gen. 37:5-10) didn't help the relationship, either. I'm sure it grieved Jacob to have his children not get along. Of course you know what happened, how Joseph was sold into slavery in Egypt.

WHY SIBLING RIVALRY HAPPENS While it is good to come from homes with other children because of the life-lessons learned, parents must still be careful of sibling rivalry. One cause is **parental favoritism**. If a child feels he is competing for his parent's love he will see siblings as rivals (as with Joseph's brothers, Jacob to Esau and Absalom needing David). Natural selfishness and self-centeredness, rooted in a child's sin nature, comes right to the surface quickly. Children naturally assume those younger or older have it better, and things aren't fair for them. Sometimes it doesn't take much of a spark to set the gasoline off!

Displaced anger is another reason for sibling rivalry. Hurts, frustrations and problems from other situations in life which can't be attacked get stored inside, often to be released on a more convenient target. The boss comes down on dad who criticizes mom who yells at the kids who kick the dog (or each other). This taking it out on each other is just a symptom of a deeper problem inside, like Cain killing Able (rebellion against God) and Jacob cheating Esau (jealousy over father's approval).

Another cause comes from **feelings of inferiority** by being compared (consciously or subconsciously) with a more accomplished sibling. Leah's antagonism to Rachael was because of this. These reasons are magnified when children go through adolescence and privacy and fairness are more important to them. Adolescents become more critical and are often easier targets for others in the family who want to get back at them for past or present actions.

Birth order has a lot to do with causing sibling rivalry, too, and must be understood.

ELDEST / FIRST BORN (the "bossy" one, the junior parent) Miriam, eldest sister of Aaron and Moses, is a typical firstborn: responsible, cooperative, willing to do unpleasant tasks for the parents, studious and serious. Reuben, the first-born in Joseph's family, was the same way. He was conscientious (protected Joseph from death). He was also the family boss, even when they were all grown. Because parents treat first-born in a more adult manner and give them more responsibility, they seem to mature more quickly. Firstborns need (demand) approval, especially from parents. First-born Absalom is a case in point, as are Cain and Esau. They strive for excellency and tend to become type A over achievers (James, Peter). They most closely identify with parents and their values. (A middle child who is the first child of their sex can also show characteristics of a first-born. Also, the first of two or more children born after a long gap will be like a first born.) Its not unusual for first-born boys to have problems growing up. Just as God claimed the first-

born male of Israel for His own, so it seems Satan works extra hard today to oppress first-born males, and through them the whole family.

ONLY CHILD ("ruling the roost," the lonely only) Only children like Isaac, Samuel, timothy and Samson are in many ways similar to first-borns. They are treated as if they are the center of the universe and feel that way. They are often over-protected and more comfortable being with adults than peers. Judging himself by adult standards all the time makes him try to grow up quickly and often causes perfectionistic standards. (A single baby born long after others in the family will also show characteristics of an only child.)

MIDDLE CHILD ("I can't win") Middle children, especially second-borns, compete against the first-born for dominance, as Cain did to eldest Able. They often become the opposite of the first-born because, being younger, they can't beat the first-born at his/her strengths. They often are full of contradictions: shy but outgoing, impatient but laid back, competitive but not competitive, rebel but peacemaker, aggressive but avoiding conflict. They have more freedom to develop as themselves for they aren't working so hard to be adult-like and get adult approval. They tend to have lower expectations and don't expect things to always be fair. They are more likely, however, to rebel against authority (and parent's values) later in life. Out-of-family friends and peers are important and they are often more open to peer pressure. We see these traits in Andrew, John and Aaron. They are often not motivated to be very studious but can be good peacemakers and mediators. (Middle children who are the youngest of their sex take on some of the qualities usually seen in youngest. Remember, the closer children are in age the more emotional impact they will have on each other, especially if they are of the same sex.)

YOUNGEST CHILD ("baby") Last-born children often have the least expectations to meet and can become spoiled (over-protected, assuming others will take care of him). He can thus be unsure of himself and lack confidence. Last-born Joseph lost all of this during his imprisonment in Egypt (one of the reasons God allowed it). Youngest get less spontaneous joy from their parents at their accomplishments (its no longer new and parents are busy with other siblings) Therefore they often becomes the clown of the family for it give him attention. However he can have trouble being taken seriously. Last-born are perceptive people persons and often end up in people-oriented vocations. David, Moses and Solomon were last-borns. (If other children are born after a long gap, the original 'baby' still continues to have last-born characteristics even though others are born after him/her.)

SOLUTION - PARENT'S SIDE Pinpoint the severity of the conflict. Is it natural, normal rivalry or do you sense something more? Talk to the children, listen between the lines, draw out their feelings by questions ("How does that make you feel?"). Differentiate between normal personality differences (especially during adolescence) and deep bitterness from unmet emotional needs or allowing sin to dominate. Teach (by word and example) how to handle anger, frustration, unfairness, not getting your own way. Set a good example by your tone of voice and attitude. Teach them to label their feelings (hate, fear, jealousy, hurt, selfishness, etc.) so they can handle them. Show unconditional love no matter what. Seek counsel from mature Christians if necessary, don't be afraid to ask for help!

SOLUTION - ADOLESCENT'S SIDE Don't always run to your parents with every little conflict. That really wears on parents! Realize everything can't and won't be fair. Be like Jesus and turn the other cheek. Practice the Golden Rule, even if others don't. Walk away from problem situations, give yourself and others time to cool off. Willow trees last through storms that destroy oaks because in hard times they can bend but oaks cannot. Put some time between yourself and the event, things look better after time passes. Don't think you'll accomplish anything by hurting someone back. They'll just try to hurt you back even more. Don't let unforgiveness build, don't let it out in little things like sarcasm, teasing, tattling, etc. Forgive them with Jesus' help. God commands you, too: "If it is possible, as much as depends on you, life at peace with everyone" (Romans 12:5,9,13,15-18). With God's help all things are possible!

RAISING GODLY TEENAGERS



By Jerry Schmoyer

5. DISCIPLINE & TRAINING

TO THINK ABOUT: Who is your favorite Bible person? Why? Who in the Bible seems similar to you (who can you identify with)? What other Bible characters have your temperament?

Why is it that adolescents are so obedient and others aren't? How can we account for the sacrificialness of Ruth (giving up own future) and Isaac (willing to give up own life)? What can we do to have our teens obey without having to nag and threaten? Ephesians 6:4 tells us.

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ... Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord."

PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITY (Eph. 6:4)

"FATHERS" are the ones responsible for the training of children of all ages. Even if they aren't with the child as much as the mother, they are ultimately responsible before God for the whole family. The wife is under the husband's authority and carries out his (their) goals. She implements what they together decide, but he is the leader with oversight and final say. That is seen in this word, too, for sometimes it is translated "parents" (Heb. 11:23).

"DO NOT EXASPERATE" is the command given to parents. That means don't frustrate a youth by too high expectations, criticism without love, withholding love, inconsistency, rejection, overburdening them with rules, expecting too much (perfectionism), overprotecting, spoiling, being over permissive or too severe. Anything but firm, consistent, loving discipline for clearly defined rules can frustrate. Especially disciplining in anger or criticizing can exasperate. Disciplining or treating adolescence like children can quickly frustrate them, too, for they have a God-given inner drive to leave childhood and become adults. They can't be like these 20 foot giants they are trying to become, if they are treated as children. They aren't mature enough to say "Don't treat me like a child. When you speak to me that way I feel like a little kid and it makes me want to fight back to show I'm not a child any more." Their negative response says it, though. Give them reasons for your rules, not "Because I said so, that's why."

"INSTEAD BRING THEM UP" means to "nourish," bring to maturity, shepherd" them. Parents do this physically, emotionally, socially, intellectually and spiritually. How is this to be done? By bringing them up *"in the training and instruction of the Lord."*

"IN THE TRAINING OF THE LORD" refers to discipline, correction, teaching self-control until they can exercise self-control over their own actions. The word "disciple" comes from this word. This requires discipline, and until self-discipline kicks in, parents must provide the discipline from without. God commands this (Eph 6:4; Prov 13:24) and children need it so they feel loved & secure. Besides, it is an example of how God treats His children (Heb. 12:11) and our discipline of our teens must reflect God's discipline of us (consistent, in love, for our betterment not just to pay for the inconvenience we have caused Him, etc.)

To correctly discipline an adolescent it is very helpful to consider the cause. There is a big difference between willful, stubborn rebellion against authority from their free will and the natural and necessary pulling away that is part of their maturity. What comes from changing hormones and what comes from the sin nature? Knowing that can be very helpful!

Teens need limits, but also freedom and flexibility. Treat them like adults but expect them to act like children. They have the same emotional needs of children for love, security and acceptance, even though they don't always show it.

It can be helpful, too, to notice in what area they choose to rebel. Its usually social life & customs (friends, dress, hair, always gone), responsibility (not carry own load, help), school performance (grades, study habits, attitudes), family relationships (getting along with parents or siblings) or values and morals (sex, TV shows, talk, deceitfulness). Why does he choose THIS area to rebel in? Is it because I expect too much in this area? Is it because its an area I haven't

totally got under control in my own life? It is overly important to me so he knows he can get to me quicker through this area? Pray and ask God for wisdom and insight into these things.

Pick your battles carefully. Don't expect instant, immediate obedience in everything. They are no longer children, give them some space to exercise their own free will. If you can't win a battle, don't let it start. Decide what is major enough to make an issue of and what isn't. When you draw the line, do it with love. *"Love covers a multitude of sins."* Always, in as many ways as possible, assure them of your unconditional love. Keep their emotional tank full.

When you must discipline, use natural consequences instead of nagging, threatening or yelling. Deprive them of a privilege that goes with their sin. The Bible says that anyone who doesn't work shouldn't eat (II Thes. 3:10). School is their work. They shouldn't eat until they do it. If they don't get along with their siblings they can't spend time with friends outside the family. If they don't treat others nicely they are isolated and can't be around others. If they spend money unwisely don't give them more or an important occasion, have them do without. Avoid power struggles and nagging at all costs! Don't spank, for it builds hate & resentment. Anything that makes them feel like you are treating them like a little child is counter productive. Make sure you don't play favorites to a child of the same sex as you -- or opposite sex. Also make sure you don't expect more of a child because he is a boy or a girl or born first.

"IN THE INSTRUCTION OF THE LORD" refers to training, prevention, so correction/discipline isn't as necessary. This is done by our example as well as words (Deut. 6:4-9). Communicate your feelings and emotions, struggles (current and as a teen) and difficulties with them. Draw them out. Ask "How did that make you feel?" Silently listen, be very slow to give advice. (James 1:19). Encourage them (I Thes 5:11). It takes 99 compliments to make up for 1 criticism.

AFTER YOU'VE BLOWN IT take responsibility for your part without blaming or justifying. Confess your sin to them and God, asking for forgiveness. Forgive yourself and reestablish communication with them. Make necessary changes so it doesn't happen again. Be patient!

TEEN'S RESPONSIBILITY (Eph. 6:1-3) The key for children (anyone still living at home and therefore under their parent's authority) is obedience out of love and respect, following the example of Jesus (Lk. 2:51). If you feel your parents are wrong be careful, maybe they have some insight you aren't aware of. Sometimes they will be wrong, allow them that right. They aren't perfect, either. Never confront them when emotions are high if you think they are wrong. Respond in love, as you want them to do to you. When you are wrong apologize and confess your sin to them and God. Seek the root problem, not just the surface symptom. Set goals to help you act in love: "The first words to my parents will be thanks." "I will clean my room before being asked." "I will have meaningful devotions each morning." Remember, "this is right" and brings God's blessing. Obey in love...

RAISING GODLY TEENAGERS



By Jerry Schmoyer

6. GOD'S WILL FOR YOUR CAREER

TO THINK ABOUT: What career does God want for you? What about who to marry? How will you know God's will in these and other areas?

KNOWING GOD'S WILL God has His perfect will for all of us in all areas of our life. It's not difficult to find, although we must be 100% committed to doing what He wants before He reveals His will to us. We can't ask Him to reveal it to us so we can consider it with our other options. If we are committed to do whatever

God wants us to do it is His responsibility to lead and guide us to make sure it gets done. We must be open and sensitive to His guidance, but He will make sure we end up doing His will and not missing it. He usually leads by putting certain desires in us, ones we can recognize as coming from Him. Acts 11:5-16 explains what some of these are: prayer (5), mind (6), His word (7-10), providential circumstances (11), Holy Spirit (12), advice of others (13-15) and Scripture memory (16). When my children want my guidance I make sure they receive it, and God does the same with us.

Sometimes we think God's will is always hard and unpleasant, that God will send us to Africa or have us do the opposite of what we'd like. It isn't unpleasant, but is good, pleasing and perfect (Romans 12:1-2). In fact, if we had all the information God has we would pick just the exact same thing for ourselves.

AREAS OF GOD'S WILL God's will in our lives covers three areas: Christian character, activities, and service. **Christian character** refers to our being conformed to the image of Jesus in all we say, do and think. This is God's will for all of us, it's not something we have to ask. His will is always for us to live holy lives of service and submission. If the Bible tells us to do or not do something, then there is no reason for us to pray and ask God's will.

Sometimes, though, the Bible doesn't speak directly about an issue. God does give us guidelines to determine His will in **Christian activities**. This area includes dress, music, entertainment, etc. Questions to ask to determine God's will in these areas include: Will it hold me back in my Christian life (Heb. 12:1)? Is it, or could it become a habit (1 Cor. 6:12)? Does it have a good influence on other Christians (1 Cor. 8:7-13) and unbelievers (Col. 4:5)? Will it be a good testimony for Jesus (1 Cor. 10:31)? Can I ask Him to help me do it? Would He do it with me if He were here?

The area of **Christian service** is the third area of knowing and doing God's will. It covers major life decisions such as what to do (career), where to live, whom to marry, etc. God has a perfect will for each one of us (Num. 22:12), but often we refuse to obey and instead insist on doing our own will. He permits this (Num. 22:20) because we have a free will and He doesn't treat us like robots. Sometimes, though, for our sake or the sake of others, He over-rules in our lives (Num 23:5,12,26).

KNOWING GOD'S CAREER FOR YOU There seem to be two ways God leads teens into His choice of a career for those who want to do His perfect will. Some times he puts a desire for a certain career into them before they finish high school. My wife always knew she wanted to be a nurse so took courses leading to that goal. Not everyone knows the final produce ahead of time, though. Often God just directs step by step. Finish high school, go to college, major in this area, learn more about that, try a job doing a certain thing, etc., until they find themselves in a place they realize is God's will. This is a faith walk, step-by-step trust on God's guidance. If this seems to be the lesser of the two ways, remember that what God keeps hidden from us is also hidden from Satan, so he can't mislead, counterfeit, confuse, etc. Trust God with it!

All along the way, especially in their teens, parents can build good work habits and attitudes into their children while praying God will lead them into the career of His choosing. Learning about various careers, even trying certain aspects of them by talking to people in those careers or visiting places of work. Part-time jobs can also give good exposure. Learn what kind of education and training is required for them, too. The more information you have the better decision you can make.

Teens also should be praying daily about God's leading in this area. They should be open to suggestions from parents and other adults who know them well. Develop talents and gifts you have, knowing God often has provided these for your future career use.

ADOLESCENT STAGES AFFECT CAREER PLANNING As teens look for their own individual identity they become more aware of having to choose a life career and it becomes more important to them, for their self identification becomes wrapped up in it. This is especially true for boys (who pick it up from their fathers and other men). Make sure you don't just pick a high-status career so others will be impressed with you now or later. Be patient, allow God to make changes as time goes on.

BIRTH ORDER AFFECTS CAREER PLANNING Traits and characteristics that are built into children by their birth order affect careers they are attracted to also. God uses these things to form them and to lead them into the path of His choosing.

First borns become natural leaders in whatever career they choose. They want responsibility, are reliable, loyal and hard working. They are able and willing to work their way from the bottom to top.

Only children are comfortable with authority figures and get along well with bosses. They want to please them as they did their parents. They are often driven perfectionists, hard or over workers.

Middle children fit in well in the corporate world in mid level positions in large organizations. They are not as driven and ambitious as first borns and have learned to get along with others. They don't need a lot of recognition, are good team players, and don't bring their own problems to work. They are good negotiators and keep the peace where they are.

Youngest children are entrepreneurs, innovative and creative. Often they don't know what to do until late in life. They can be insecure and sensitive to criticism, not liking to be told what to do. They are independent, competitive and not good team players (they undermine the authority of those over them). They are good listeners and pick up on other's feelings.

TEMPERAMENTS AFFECT CAREER PLANNING Temperaments have a lot to do with career choice. Always keep them in mind when thinking of a career. God will stretch you so you have to depend on Him, but won't lead you to do something totally opposite of your temperament.

Sanguines are people-oriented salesmen types who excel in working with people. They make great salesmen (except the paper work), actors, entertainers, auctioneers, politicians, hospital workers and receptionists.

Cholerics are strong natural leaders that are goal/project oriented and like to manage others. They are natural developers, entrepreneurs, visionaries, police, military people, administrators, high school teachers, crusaders and bank trust officers.

Melancholies are creative, analytical individuals with strong perfectionistic tendencies who have aesthetic traits. They become composers, artists, musicians, inventors, philosophers, theoreticians, theologians, scientists, educators, beauticians and authors.

Phlegmatics are cool, detailed individuals who tend to limit themselves. They can do statistical, microscopic work that would drive others crazy! They become good elementary school teachers, counselors, engineers, mechanics, veterinarians, dentists, carpenters, farmers, accountants, diplomats, gourmet cooks, electricians and repairmen.

Do you want God's will done in your life? If you do and try your best to be totally open and sensitive to God, He will make sure it comes about. Their key is open submission!

RAISING GODLY TEENAGERS



By Jerry Schmoyer

7. THE GREAT CHRISTIAN MUSIC DEBATE

TO THINK ABOUT: What kind of music do you like best? What kind of Christian music? Why? What is it about this music that especially appeals to you?

Music and teenagers -- what images come to mind? Parents, remember what role music played in your adolescent years. Music and adolescence has always been and will always be closely connected. For one thing, music is a great way of expressing emotions and feelings, and teens have plenty of those they often don't know how to express in any other way. Also, it becomes a way of independence, of expressing their own ability to think and choose for themselves (by choosing something different than what parents choose). It thus becomes a form of rebellion, as well as a way of fitting in with other peers, of being accepted.

Unfortunately Christians and even home schooling Christians aren't exempt from this. Some feel even praise songs shouldn't be sung in church, others find nothing wrong with heavy metal Christian groups. It has become divisive among churches and Christians, as well as among

home schoolers. Who is right? Is anyone right? How can we handle this area? Lets begin by looking at a fine musician in the Bible.

DAVID THE MUSICIAN David, the man after God's own heart, had three careers. He was a shepherd (because his earthly father told him to be it), a king (because his heavenly Father told him to be it) and a musician (because he chose that for himself). Its was where his own natural ability and desire lay. From a youth on he played his harp, composed and sang songs to God (Psalms in the Bible). There was no music controversy in David's day. There was variety, but all kinds were accepted by all people. There was no difference between secular and religious music. Instruments used included harps (Rev 5:8), stringed instruments (Hab 3:19; Ps 8; 92:3), horns, trumpets, loud-sounding cymbals (Ps 150:5), harps, lyres (I Chron 15:28-29), timbrels, tambourines (Ex 15:20), and pipes (Ps 150:4). This certainly gave them a wide variety of sounds. In fact, the Bible speaks of this variety. Some music was loud (II Chron 30:21), like a waterfall or thunder (Rev 5:9) or shouting (I Chron 15:28). Other times it was quieter, like harps (Rev 14:2) or singing voices (II Chron 5:12-13), or a joyful noise (Ps 95:1). Music was often accompanied by leaping and making merry (I Chron 15:29), clapping (Ps 47:1), dancing (Ex 15:20), lifting hands (Ps 134:2), standing (I Chron 23:30) or bowing or kneeling (Ps 95:6).

PRINCIPLES TO GO BY

1. There are no absolutes, large variety is allowable. There was no one way to use music. But then, remember that all secular music came from religious music (not vice versa). Today we have a much greater variety of music. In fact, if all of it is indeed 'music' depends on your definition of music! Still, I don't believe there is any innate right and wrong concerning the mainstream of Christian music today (perhaps some of the extreme fringes - but we won't all agree on what is an extreme fringe either, will we?). I believe it is more personal preference, how God leads individuals. He leads us to different conclusions about churches and denominations, clothes and styles, home decor, TV programs, tastes in food and entertainment, etc. Paul says we should think of things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, praiseworthy (Philippians 4:8). Those mean different things to different people in different cultures. We aren't to judge another by our standards.

2. It is legitimate to use music for entertainment, not just worship. If we enjoy music but it doesn't lead to worship, does that mean it isn't right? I don't think the only use of music is worship. The Jews used it for all kinds of things, even going to war (II Chron 20:21). While indirectly all we do can come under the broad umbrella of 'worship,' in its strict definition I feel it is legitimate to enjoy worship that doesn't lead to worship. I like "Oklahoma," but it doesn't lead me to worship. Should I not listen to it? No! God allows beautiful art, fine literature, and good music to entertain and enjoy without them being worship.

For me its important to tell how the music affects me to determine its place in my life. Some touches my soul and causes worship, some (or sometimes the very same music) touches my flesh and provides enjoyment, entertainment. That is fine, too. However sometimes the part of my flesh that is moved is part of the sin nature, and the music brings feelings, emotions and responses that I don't think are from God's Holy Spirit. The Bible speaks of "flesh" in both these terms: the sin nature (II Pt. 2:18; I Jn 2:16; Rom 7:5; 8:8-9) and man himself as a human being (Phil 3:3-4; I Cor 15:50; Jn 6:51-57; II Cor 7:5; James 5:3). This is the 'human' part of Adam, before sin entered, that we still all retain. Jesus Himself had this as a man (John 1:14; I Tim 3:16; II Jn 7; I Jn 4:2). Just because something entertains me and I enjoy it doesn't mean it is sin. That applies to everything, not just music.

WHEN YOUR TEEN LIKES MUSIC YOU DISLIKE... Chances are your teen wants to listen to music you don't like and aren't sure if he should or not. What should you do?

1. PRAY for openness, patience, wisdom (James 1), insight, sensitivity.

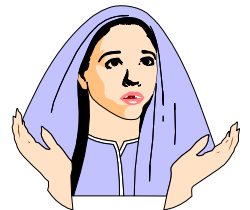
2. GATHER INFORMATION about the groups and kind of music your teen likes as well as the whole Contemporary Christian music debate. Read books from BOTH sides of the issue. Talk to other parents and teens. Do all this with an open mind.

3. FOCUS ON THE ROOT CAUSE. Realize music is more a symptom than a problem, and we shouldn't treat symptoms. Ask your teen WHY he likes his form of music and groups. Listen carefully. Ask questions to get to the root of it, so he thinks through this subject himself and isn't just doing what others are doing. Be sensitive to the need to be independent and different from parents -- that is the root cause. It isn't a problem unless the rebellion is very open, strong and inflexible. Then for sure the root rebellion needs to be worked out (usually with outside help) before the music issue can be addressed.

4. LEARN TO COMMUNICATE. Make sure you carefully listen to them with an open heart, the same way you want them to listen to you. Be able to give them their own reasoning back in your own words, and make sure they can express your concerns/position to you in their own words. The conclusion you come to over this isn't nearly important in the long run as how you come to that conclusion. You will be establishing patterns of how to handle differences that will last. Therefore the process of handling this issue is really more important than the final product. Please, please, please keep that in mind!

5. COME TO AN ACCEPTABLE COMPROMISE, both sides willing to bend. Clearly define where the limits are set and what is expected. Perhaps a limited amount of music of their choice 30 minutes or 1 hour a day, after school, with head set so others don't hear it, could be an acceptable compromise instead of the all-or-nothing, winner-take-all battles that often go on. Remember to keep your relationship with your teen 10 and 20 years down the road in mind as you handle this issue, and remember yourself at that age!

RAISING GODLY TEENAGERS



By Jerry Schmoyer

8. PEER PRESSURE & SELF WORTH

TO THINK ABOUT: On a scale of 1 to 10, how important to you is what other people think of you? How important is it to your children?

DANIEL Peer pressure is nothing new. Peter succumbed to it when he denied Jesus. Lot lived his life by it. Rehoboam lost his kingdom by giving it to it. Daniel is a good example of someone who didn't give in, and whom God blessed. Away from family and friends, he "resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine," and, despite the external pressure to be like everyone else, took a stand for God (Daniel 1). As a result Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah rallied around him. The other Jewish boys in captivity gave in and went along. Everyone today is like one of these three groups: give in and go along, follow a strong leader who does what is right, or be the strong one to take the stand yourself no matter what others do. Which group do you fit into? Which do your children fit into? By the way, parents, what do you think Daniel's parents did so that he took such a stand in his early teen years?

PEERS AND FRIENDS The reason peer pressure is such a force in teenage years is because adolescents turn from their parents and move to ones their own age for approval and acceptance. God made them to become independent, to break the apron strings, to fly the nest and become adults in their own right. They must stop being children dependent on their parents. Still the jump

from child dependent on parents (the 20' giant) to being independent adults is too big to make in one leap, so a middle step, a safe island between those two continents, is found. Teens turn from parents to each other, making the break from parents easier and the distance to cover less great. Then, when they find they are secure with others, they make the final leg of the journey to adult independence without needing per approval. At least that is how it is supposed to work!

Daniel and his 3 friends helped each other through this, but before long they have gone their separate ways. Early teen years (junior high or middle school) is when peer pressure is greatest. By later teen years (high school) there is more independence and freedom to be themselves. How smoothly and easily this transition is made depends on the security and acceptance that they found in their family up to this time. Do you know who Jephthah was? His father was a great warrior, but his mother was a prostitute (Judges 11). Legitimate siblings rejected him and he left home to lead a gang of lawless youths. There he found the acceptance and respect he should have found at home. God used the lessons he learned in fighting and leadership for he became a fairly good judge of Israel in his day. It is obvious he used his friends to meet needs in his life, and those needs were magnified by his family not having accepted him when he was younger. Leaving home is natural and normal ("a man must leave his father and mother..." Genesis 2:24), and having the right friends can help a whole lot.

IMPORTANCE OF GOOD FRIENDS Don't deny your adolescents peer relationships for that will make it harder for them to take that jump to independent adulthood. Extroverts especially need peers. Introverts who are afraid (they won't admit it is fear, though) of developing at least a few friendships may have trouble making the adjustment. Instead, do your best to help your teens develop good relationships. Encourage wholesome friendships.

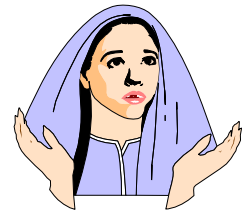
HOW MUCH PROTECTION? How are we to know when we are overprotecting our teens or when we are not protecting them enough? Each teen is different and many factors enter in. I like to think of children like plants. Young plants do much better in a greenhouse where they are protected from anything harmful, fertilized, watered, pruned, and carefully watched. The idea is to develop a strong root structure (Psalm 1). The purpose of the plant is to live outside the green house, though. Putting it outside too soon will kill it, keeping it in too long will keep it from being what it was meant to be. Short exposure in safe conditions is a good start, gradually building up to being able to withstand harsher and harsher environment until they can be outside all the time (when they leave home, late teen years). Some point to a strong tree growing alone on a hillside and say it was never sheltered and is better off for it. However, for every tree that makes it in that environment dozens, perhaps hundreds, die before reaching maturity, and many of the ones which survived are permanently dwarfed or deformed. Get the idea? Apply this to your children. Are they on schedule for when they will leave home?

SELF WORTH In order to take that giant leap from dependent child to independent adult a teen must have confidence in himself and his ability to function in the world. Who is he? How does he measure up? Where does he fit in? How adequate is he or she as a male or female? What are their own beliefs and values? Here again peers come in for it is in comparing themselves with others that they see where they measure up. A natural stage all go through is to feel unsure about themselves. Adolescence are very sensitive to their weak areas and magnify them. Its not unusual to feel inferior during these years. Sometimes, though, a combination of too high expectations (or no expectations at all) from their parents and an introvert temperament combine to have a child feel extra bad about themselves. This can result in overt rebellion and desire to conform to peers, eating disorders (bulimia nervosa or anorexia nervosa, especially for girls), alcohol or drug usage, or even thoughts/attempts of suicide. Suicide is one of the leading causes of death for teens and college age youth. A realistic acceptance of ones self and feelings of worth are very important to prevent/cure these.

Notice I am not using the term “self-love,” for I feel that is self-centered, prideful and unbiblical (II Tim. 3:1-5). We must accept ourselves (recognize and accept both our strengths and weakness) as God made us. Avoid extremes: self love (I’m better than others) and self hate (I’m no good, I’m worse than others). Both are an inordinate focus on self as being too good/bad for God. The Bible says we are to forget ourselves and be preoccupied with God, not self. We are to be servants of others. Self evaluation is a must, or how can we know what weak areas to improve and what sin to confess. Recognizing our strengths helps know and use our talents and spiritual gifts for God.

[illegible]

RAISING GODLY TEENAGERS



By Jerry Schmoyer

9. CHANGING BODIES (Sex, Dress, etc.)

TO THINK ABOUT: What is the difference between what the world says about sex and appearance and what the Bible says?

Vashti is one of the unsung heroes (heroines) of the Bible. Even though she wasn't a follower of God, she had enough moral integrity to give up everything in life rather than compromise her moral convictions (Esther 1). Obviously beautiful, she wouldn't allow her beauty to be used for immoral purposes. Her replacement as queen, Esther, was also very beautiful (chosen for her beauty). She, too, had more than outer looks. Despite being a young teenager, she risked her life for the sake of her people, the Jews. God honored that.

While the Bible tells us much about the people on its pages, it gives almost no information about the appearance of any of them. Was Ruth tall and slim? Was Mary short and cross-eyed? Did John have acne? Were they fashionable in dress? None of this is given, as if saying these things don't matter! Unfortunately in the 20th century these things matter a lot -- too much! Jesus Himself looked just like everyone else, no different at all. That's one reason Judas was needed to point Him out in a group. In our shallowness today we seem to base everything on outer appearances. For youth growing up in this culture there is great pressure to conform, subtle messages that the body and sex mean everything.

MAKING A 'STATEMENT' Dress, like music, can be used as a way of rebellion against adult standards. It can be a way of making a 'statement.' Conformity to peers and independence from parents can be shown loudly and clearly. Adolescence is a hard time to remember that it's what's inside that matters to God and to those who really count (1 Samuel 16:7; 1 Peter 3:1-6).

TEENAGE SEXUALITY Unfortunately focusing on the outer body doesn't stop with clothing, but spills over to include sexuality and morality. Outer dress is just a symptom of a deeper preoccupation with sex. Studies show that 70% of teens have had sex by age 18, and the statistics of sex among Christians is only slightly lower! In a time when society gives no clear-cut passage from childhood to adulthood (like Bar Mitzvah for the Jews or initiation rites for American Indians), sexuality has been used to show maturity. It becomes an end in itself, rather than a means to an end. Samson is typical of many today who use sex to get love and attention, to prove their adulthood, to fill a void in life that only a close relationship with God can fill. Sex is a play thing of the shallow, immature, self-centered, impatient person then and now.

NO SEX BEFORE MARRIAGE The Bible clearly says sex is only for marriage. It is God's wedding gift to man, created before sin entered. Just like a parachute only works from a plane and not a building, so sex only meets its God-created purpose in the commitment of marriage. Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16-17) and everything we do must be for God's glory (1 Cor 6:20; 10:31). Satan uses sex to tempt people to sin (Gal. 5:19) (Joseph and Potiphar's wife; David and Bathsheba). Everything we do must be done with God's blessing (Col 3:17) and to help us grow spiritually (Heb 12:1). God provides self control (1 Cor 6:12-13) so we can be a good testimony to unbelievers (Col 4:5) and believers (1 Cor 8:7-13). He provides a way out of every temptation (1 Cor. 10:13).

HOW FAR TO GO??? While Christians agree that sex before marriage is forbidden, there isn't much agreement on just where to draw the line. Song of Solomon (2:7; 3:5; 8:4) says to not start any kind of sexual desire in another person. That certainly can be done by touching, kissing or hugging. However not every touch, kiss or hug produces sexual urges or desires to do more. When wondering where to draw the

line ask yourself what Jesus would do were he in your situation. Think about what you want your future mate to do in a similar situation. Treat each other as a brother or sister and you won't go wrong.

SEX IN GOD'S SIGHT The reason sex is so special (and so attacked by Satan) is that it, in a special way, seals the oneness of a husband and wife while showing the oneness of a Christian and Jesus (Eph. 5:31; Gen. 2:24). Thus sexual sin breaks a very special union between two people (I Cor. 6:16) and between man and God

MENTAL SIN While not doing anything sexual before marriage is one thing, the Bible says we aren't even to entertain sexual thoughts for that is as sinful as sexual acts (Mt. 5:28). Men who look at or think of things they shouldn't are committing sin. For women the forbidden lust takes a more romantic turn than physical, for women are made to respond to romance more while men are more physically oriented. Romance books (even Christian ones), soap operas, and things of that nature are emotional lust, desiring something God doesn't give, seeking to bring pleasure to ones self through our imagination and fantasy. That is as dangerous and sinful for girls as pornography is for boys. It may be worse in that the danger isn't always recognized.

PURPOSE OF SEX IN MARRIAGE The purpose of sex in marriage is two-fold. Propagation (Gen 1:27-28; 9:1) is one reason. Adolescence need to learn about birth control and reproduction as soon as they can (gradually from young on, bit by bit as they need/can understand more and more). Without truth they will imagine answers or glean them from the world, both worse than the truth. The Bible says conception is a gift from God (Gen 4:1,13; 16:2; 17:19; 29:31; 30:22) and children are a blessing from God (Psalm 127). The Bible doesn't say that proper birth control is sinful, but that God must lead in this area of life, too.

Sex isn't just for procreation, it is also to promote mutual love (Gen. 3:16; 18:12; 26:8; Deut 34:7; 24:5; Prov. 5:15-19; Song of Sol 7:6-10). It is for pleasure, without guilt (Heb 13:5).

TEMPERAMENTS AND SEXUAL RESPONSES Sanguines are most susceptible to sexual temptation since they often have a big need to be loved and weak self control. Choleric are too goal-oriented to get side tracked easily. Melancholies who choose to use sex as a substitute for love can get drawn in, as can Phlegmatics looking for acceptance. Middle children seem to have a harder time avoiding sex before marriage than other birth orders.

WHAT TEENS CAN DO Commit yourself to be pure in mind and body. Its your decision, no one can force you for its a decision of your mind. Focus on Jesus. Pray and memorize Scripture (Psalm 119:9,11). Find someone you can talk to (an adult of the same sex) about questions and temptations you have, someone who will pray for you and hold you accountable.

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO Realize there is a big difference between having a child who is pure and one who is naive. Keep them pure, but not naive. Give them all the information they can handle. Truth is the best weapon against error and confusion. Its not just facts, but attitudes that you communicate that mean as much or more than the facts. Welcome their physical changes and help them feel good about their bodies and developing sexuality. Encourage positive relationships with the opposite sex. Let them know lines must be drawn and help them to internalize moral standards (not just conform outwardly because you make them). If they do these things they will have the conviction to carry through when you aren't around as well as in their thought life (where you can't get). Also, their dress will then fall in line with Biblical standards and you won't have to be nagging them about little things all the time. Spend much time praying for them, and for wisdom for yourself.

RAISING GODLY TEENAGERS



By Jerry Schmoyer

10. COURTSHIP & MARRIAGE

TO THINK ABOUT: Name three traits you want in the person you will marry?

The second most important decision anyone has to make is whom to marry (the first is to accept Jesus as Savior). It's a very difficult decision for many, especially if the choice isn't left to God. Mistakes in this area have far-reaching consequences. Consider Samson's decision to marry an unbelieving Philistine, David to marry Michal, and Dinah's wanting to marry Shechem (Gen. 34). Those who left the choice to God, like Ruth (for Boaz) and Isaac (for Rebekah). Joseph and Mary are fine examples, too.

JOSEPH & MARY They are special because they both put God before their mate, and their mate before themselves. Mary was willing to give up Joseph to have God's Son, for she had no guarantee he would believe the source of her pregnancy, or even if he did would still want to marry her. Joseph also obeyed God by deciding not to marry her when local gossip reached him informing him of her pregnancy. His choice was to suffer financial and social loss instead of allowing her to be publicly ridiculed for being pregnant before marriage. No wonder she could trust him and defer to him, obeying him when he said to move in the middle of the night. Putting God first is a must to have a successful courtship and marriage.

Let's look at the elements that go into being and finding the right mate:

STAGES OF ADOLESCENCE Before adolescence starts, children go through a time when they really dislike the opposite sex and don't want anything to do with them. They all but ignore their existence, except to be disgusted with them. While their backs are turned to each other, God starts working into children to turn them into adults. All of a sudden they start noticing each other, and are amazed and impressed with the change that has taken place!

At first adolescents need affirmation of their maleness/femaleness by acceptance by those of their same sex, but after a couple years this expands to include those of the opposite sex. Friendships with the opposite sex are very important for what an adolescent learns about themselves as well as how to relate to the opposite sex. This is important for them to discover what traits they like and don't like in the opposite sex, as well as how to communicate.

TEMPERAMENTS AND MARRIAGE Sanguines are natural charmers and can easily win others, but usually do it for selfish reasons (so they will be liked). They need to develop deep moral principles from young and stay close to the Spirit for their own self-control is weak. They need a loving, responsive and affectionate mate who responds well.

Cholerics are so goal-oriented they will do all the right things to win a mate, but when they have them their goal switches to providing and they can easily become workaholics. They need to mature emotionally (instead of ignoring and stuffing their emotions) and have a mate who is secure, mature and can speak the truth in love.

Melancholies have high expectations of themselves and others. They are sensitive and sacrificial enough to win a mate, but then often become introverted and depressed. They need God's help to give unconditional love. They need to marry a person not easily offended, who can encourage and reassure them.

Phlegmatics attract others because of their gentleness and acceptance. They don't get pushy, but often manipulate without noticing it. They need Jesus' help to put others first, show love, and have victory over fear. They need a mate who will understand and accept their seeming lack of motivation without resentment and will bring out the best in them.

Introverts tend to marry extroverts. Seldom will two introverts or extroverts marry, and rarely will two of the same temperament marry. Opposites attract, for we see another's strength where our weakness' are and admire that. We must be aware of the weakness', too. Usually

mates will share one temperament (predominate in one, secondary in another) and that will be the 'glue' that gives them something in common, a place to start building.

BIRTH ORDER AND MARRIAGE Firstborns like to be in charge and seldom marry other first borns or only children. Middle children make good mates for they know how to compromise and avoid difficulties, but usually don't marry each other because they tend to avoid difficulties. The babies of the family need a mate with patience who will reassure them.

BIBLICAL BOY-GIRL RELATIONSHIPS

The world says "marry the one you love." The Bible says "love the one you marry" (Ephesians 5:25; Titus 2:4). The world says you are to go from one relationship to the next until you find the 'right' one. The Bible says you don't give your heart away until you do find the right one. Traditional Christianity says you should save your body for the right person only (physical virginity), but you can give your heart away many times. The Bible says to save your heart and body both for the right person (emotional virginity). The Bible is right! Not only is it God's inspired Word, but look at the mess relationships going the world's way are in today! We know the world's way doesn't work.

"Treat younger men as brothers and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity" (1 Timothy 5:12). While Paul wasn't talking about boy-girl relationships, the principle set down here certainly does apply. Boys and girls should treat each other like brothers and sisters in all their relationships and dealings until God has clearly shown them the one they are to marry. Then they can commit themselves and romance can enter the picture. "Dating" as our world does it doesn't teach us how to marry, it teaches us how to break up and divorce. The things we do to impress, win and keep a boyfriend or girlfriend are usually dishonest and self-centered. They do not prepare for married life. We resemble the animal kingdom where the male struts to win a female whom he then jealously defends against all others.

By using the brother-sister pattern and not giving their hearts away until they are ready to marry, our children can be much better off than we were! The purpose in their relationships with the opposite sex should be to bless the other person and do what is best for them in the long run. They should treat people in whom they have no romantic interest no worse than they treat people in whom they do have a romantic interest. They are to treat members of both sexes the same. They are to treat those in and outside their family the same. They are to do nothing now with members of the opposite sex that they wouldn't do later when married to someone else. They are to treat all others like brothers or sisters. This would take a lot of the pressure off and allow wholesome relationships and friendships to develop. Time together can be spent doing worthwhile things with others instead of paring up in a way and place that leads to temptation and trouble. Nothing should be said by words or body language to show favoritism or in any way try to win another's heart.

RAISING GODLY TEENAGERS



By Jerry Schmoyer

11. SPIRITUAL GROWTH

A Sunday School teacher became deeply concerned for the conversion of a teen-age girl in her class. Lovingly and earnestly she spoke to the girl on the all-important subject -- her soul's salvation. The girl listened respectfully. She decided against Christ, saying that in later years she would give consideration to her relationship to Christ. The teacher went away with a dad heart.

On her way home she thought of a novel plan to impress on the girl the unfairness of giving her youthful years to sin and then turning to Christ for forgiveness. Stopping at a florist's shop she bought a dozen beautiful roses. She kept the roses in the florist's box for several days. Then she sent them to the girl. The girl was elated to receive the gift until she opened the box and saw the faded and wilted flowers. "Some practical joke has been played on me," she said in disgust. Shortly thereafter the teacher called on the girl again. The girl told her about the faded roses she had received. "I sent them" said the teacher. "When you chose not to give Christ your youthful years, you decided to present to Him later a life faded and withered like those roses!" The girl answered, "Teacher, I see it. It will not be that way. I will give myself to Christ right now and live for His glory."

GODLY TEENS TODAY This is a commitment every teen must make. It isn't easy for anyone, and especially adolescents who are separating from their parents and seeking what they believe for themselves. Peer pressure doesn't make it any easier.

The Bible says: *"Remember your Creator in the days of your youth"* (Ecclesiastes 12:1). There are good Bible examples of godly teenagers: John, John Mark and Josiah to name a few. It was their choice to follow Jesus, nothing that could have been forced on them. They were motivated to do it, not manipulated. Manipulation does not produce long-term results!

MANIPULATION VS MOTIVATION Motivation is the process of instilling the desire to act. It comes from within (self and/or Holy Spirit). Manipulation only forces external action but no internal compliance. It is done in the flesh. Motivation appeals to reasoning, wisdom, long-range goals based on love and trust for God and others. Manipulation is based on fear, greed and pride. God never manipulates anyone, He does motivate through His Spirit. We cannot manipulate teens, especially in spiritual matters. We can do our best to motivate them, though.

1. Use Their Natural Bent *"Train up a child in the way he should go (literally "according to his natural bent") and when he is old he will not turn from it"* (Prov. 22:6). This especially refers to temperaments. Sanguines and Phlegmatics must set their own long-range goals and believe in them, then trust God for daily self-control to move in that direction. Choleric are very goal-oriented, but must have goals that benefit God and others, not just themselves. Melancholies are motivated by genuine praise, not by criticism. Their perfectionism causes them to set too high goals (or none at all out of fear of failure).

2. Use the Salt Principle You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink. True, but you can feed him salt! Find a spark of interest and fan and feed it like a small fire. Use their interests to create curiosity in other areas.

3. Help Them Choose Their Own Goals Ask them: "What do you want from life? What would you like to be doing 20 years from now? Who would you like to be when you grow up (and why)?" Then together talk about the steps that will have to be taken to reach those goals, focusing on the first steps which start now.

4. Let Them Experience the Negative Results of Not Reaching Goals Don't always bail them out, allow them to fail. Natural consequences teach great lessons! Let them wear dirty clothing, miss a meal or activity, not have enough money for an activity or purchase, etc., if they don't plan ahead and follow through. God teaches us this way - it's called "life."

5. Remember the Power of Praise Positive reinforcement works much better than fear, threats or bribery. Praise them for the spiritual sparks that are there. Complement them for what they do right, spiritually and in other ways. Communicate that you expect them to succeed, not fail. Don't point out failures, they already know these well enough!

SPIRITUAL GROWTH Our goal as parents is to motivate them to grow spiritually, but we can't do the spiritual growing for them any more than we could do their physical growing when first born. Following spiritual birth (John 1:12,13; 3:3) comes growth (II Peter 3:18). This comes from taking

in healthy nourishment (the Bible - I Cor. 3:1-2; Jer. 15:16). As growth comes, communication skills develop (prayer - I Thes 5:18; Eph 6:18; Heb 4:16). Mobility (walking) comes close behind (Gal 5:16; II Cor 5:7; John 8:12). Walking in obedience to Jesus, facing obstacles (temptations) without falling, and when we do stumble we get up (confession). These are all skills that need to be taught to younger children. Older children and teens need to be motivated to continue in them, They must be encouraged to develop their relationship with Jesus on their own.

TEENS MUST INTERNALIZE VALUES & BELIEFS If things haven't gone well with parent and teen during children, during adolescence they will often reject their parent's beliefs when they pull away from their parents. Even when the relationship has been good and the pulling away smooth and gentle, teens still must internalize their parent's beliefs and values as their own. It is no longer good enough that they have always been taught something, now they must believe it for themselves. Give them space and time to work through things. This process should start during childhood. Allow them to question, discuss, experiment and think through things. Don't force outer conformity!!! Tell them the WHY of things, especially spiritual things (start this early in life, too). Give them freedom and flexibility to be able to start doing things, especially spiritual beliefs and practices, because they choose to do them for themselves. Help them set their own spiritual goals: short and long-range. Talk with them about how to attain these goals.

CHURCH INVOLVEMENT Should teens be forced to go to church with their parents? How much freedom and flexibility should we give? There are areas where we as parents must step in and overrule, especially if long-term damage can result. Church attendance is not optional (Heb. 10:25). This doesn't mean we should make them go every time the church doors are open. Perhaps they could be allowed to choose a service to attend (something more substantial than the youth program, though, like a worship service). In fact, you might feel they are better off NOT attending your church's youth program.

Remember, church is a means to an end, not the end itself. Commitment to Jesus and growth in His likeness are the end products we seek. It can be embarrassing to parents to allow our teens some space, especially in spiritual areas, but that is our problem with peer pressure! We must do what is right for them in the long run, not what is easiest for us in the present. Our teens are sharp enough to pick this up, and it speaks volumes to them!

PRAY! Above all, over all, before and after all, during all -pray, pray, pray, pray, pray and pray.

RAISING GODLY TEENAGERS



By Jerry Schmoyer

12. SPIRITUAL WARFARE

As we conclude this series on raising Godly teenagers we must cover one final element. While God wants us to raise our children to be like Jesus, and that is our goal as parents, we have an enemy who is doing all he can to harm our children and keep them from God's best. Doing all things right without protecting them from this danger means we will fail. Educating a soldier without giving him weapons and armor is a sure way to defeat. Satan is our enemy, and if he can keep our children from God's will he can control a whole generation!

ADOLESCENCE: A DANGEROUS TIME Because teens move away from their family they also often move away from God and the church. They want independence and freedom from any and

all authority. They want to decide for themselves. they move toward others their age and the whole worldly teen culture to find acceptance and recognition. They experiment with new (and previously forbidden) things. All this opens them up in a very real way to Satanic forces having access to work in or against them. That's why things like suicide, anorexia and bulimia are so prevalent among teens today. Parents and teens alike must learn how to prevent this.

TEENS IMPACT ON THE WHOLE FAMILY Satan not only tries to defeat teens themselves, he tries to make the whole family miserable through them. For years our family has battled demons named "Frustration" and "Misery" whose work was just what their names suggested. They would cause strife among the children, especially through one particular child, and it would spread to the whole house. Their plan was to make things miserable and they quite often succeeded. We have learned to pray against that at the start of each day and as soon as we sense ourselves feeling it happen. More recently there is a spirit of "Argumentativeness" that rears its ugly head. "Hate" tries to do just that in the children, so they hate each other. As soon as we notice these things we pray against them, usually with the children involved. Quite often demons incite children to behavior that will affect others in the family.

We've seen several cases of children being motivated to do things to get into trouble so they would get scolded a lot. That developed an inferiority feeling in them, an image of always being bad or not pleasing their parents. Unless reversed that sets a pattern for life that is all too common! This just feeds rebellion and causes teens to turn to peers for acceptance.

ADOLESCENTS & DEMONIZING While we often overlook this fact, children & adolescents can be demonized (strongly influenced by demons). Even young children are attacked. Mark 9:14-29 tells about a young boy who "from childhood" (small toddler), was possessed by a spirit that robbed him of speech, seized him and threw him to the ground. It made him foam at the mouth, gnash his teeth and become rigid. Mark 7:24-30 tells about a "little daughter" (very young girl) who was possessed by an evil spirit. If this can happen to children it can happen to teens.

Often first born males are especially attacked (demons move down family lines through firstborn males when possible, the same as God did in the Old Testament with the Jews). The form the demonic attacks take could be anything from unwholesome fantasies to bitterness toward siblings to open rebellion against parents.

Make sure the teen who is under attack knows that he is not the problem but that he has a problem. Often children and teens are more aware of these things than we think. They may be so used to hearing voices in their heads, seeing manifestations in their room at night, or being controlled by feelings/emotions beyond their control that they don't realize these are unusual. Spend some unrushed time letting them talk. Ask lots of questions and listen carefully to the answers. Try to put yourself in their place. Take everything they says seriously. Make notes of things to pray about or talk about later. Be sensitive to God's leading. Go with your impulses and thoughts, they are from God at a time like this. Pray for wisdom from God (James 1) about these things and what the openings may be. Pray specifically for God's deliverance from the things you see going wrong in their life ("rebellion," "hate," etc.).

When too young to understand (below 5 or 6) children don't even have to be present when you pray for their deliverance. As a parent you can pray for your children with authority (Job 1:5), the same as you pray for yourself. When they are older (about 5 to 10) they should be included for the purpose of educating them about these things. By adolescence they can pray for themselves, and they can start learning about spiritual warfare, too. Of course when there is specific sin in their lives they should confess it. The older they are the more responsible they become (especially from about 8 years old on) and the more they should be involved. Their openness to this depends on the type of oppression they are receiving. Rebellion will draw them from you while fear can bring them closer to you. The father as the spiritual leader should pray for the children. Each morning he should pray specifically for each one by name. If for whatever reason the father isn't filling this role as he should the mother can and should take over.

As for praying for deliverance for children or adolescence, just follow Jesus' example. He administered deliverance to children the same as He did to adults (Mark 7:24-30; 9:14-25).

PRAYING FOR YOUR TEEN Pray regularly and specifically for your child. Satan has a plan and purpose for their life. Be sensitive to what it might be and break it in Jesus' name. Some of the time pray out loud with them so they can learn how to pray for themselves and so they know they are committed to God's care and protection. Pray that Jesus be formed in the youth (Galatians 4:19), that they be delivered from Satan (Matthew 6:13; Proverbs 11:21), that they will be taught by God and experience His peace (Isaiah 54:13), that they will learn to discern good from evil (Hebrews 5:14; I Peter 3:21), that God's principles will be in their minds and on their hearts (Hebrews 8:10), that they will choose friends who are wise and a good influence (Proverbs 13:20; I Corinthians 5:11), that they will remain sexually pure (Ephesians 5:3,31-33), that they will trust and honor their parents (Ephesians 6:1-3), that they will find as well as be the right mate and that their marriage will last their whole life, and that they will know the career of God's choosing.

There is no substitute for regular, specific, serious prayer for your family and especially adolescents and teens. Don't neglect this. It isn't always easy to do, but is a real must! Remember, "Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world!" (I John 4:4).

<p>OTHER RESOURCES: There are many good resources available on this subject. I have done a series on Spiritual Warfare and the Home Schooler for the <i>Bucks Area Homeschoolers</i> newsletter, and I have a "Spiritual Warfare Handbook" which I put together for use. These are available upon request. Also, any counsel or prayer we can give you on this subject will be gladly provided. Just call or write: Jerry Schmoyer, 252 W. State St., Doylestown, Pa. 18901 Phone is 215-348-8086.</p>
